

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 DHA-02 ORM-02 AID-05 /077 W

-----091022Z 006376 /11

R 090215Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 953

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7703

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PINT, LA, TH

SUBJ: LAO RESISTANCE ELEMENT OCCUPIES ISLAND IN MEKONG

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS IN RECENT DAYS, A 100-MAN LAO RESISTANCE GROUP LED BY A CAPTAIN KAMBAO MOTHAVONGSE, "COMMANDER OF THE CHAO FAH ARMY," HAS OCCUPIED FOR A WEEK DON CHING CHU ISLAND IN MEKONG RIVER, APPROXIMATELY 15 KMS UPSTREAM FROM VIENTIANE. LPLA SOLDIERS ON THE ISLAND REPORTEDLY FLED AT GROUPS ARRIVAL. PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE NOTED SOME FEAR ON PART OF LOCAL THAI OFFICIALS THAT LPLA MAY COUNTERATTACK, WHICH COULD FORCE THAI TO RESPOND SHOULD SHELLS CARRY TOO FAR AND BEGIN FALLING ON THAI TERRITORY.

2. ACCORDING TO CONSULATE UDORN, ISLAND IS LARGE ONE WHICH SOME 80 FAMILIES OCCUPY AND FARM. MUCH CLOSER TO THAILAND (200 YARDS) THAN TO LAOS (800 YARDS), IT IS ACCEPTED AS BEING LAO TERRITORY, WHICH LPLA SOLDIERS VISIT FROM TIME TO TIME. RESISTANCE FORCE PRESENTLY OCCUPYING IT SEEMS TO BE FAR SMALLER THAN THAT CITED IN THE PRESS AND IS PROBABLY COMPOSED OF EX-FAR. THAI HAVE NOT REINFORCED THEIR OWN TROOPS BUT HAVE PLACED THOSE THERE ON ALERT.

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3. THAI NAVAL OFFICER TOLD CONOFF APRIL 8 THAT RTG IS NOT SUPPORTING THIS SMALL RESISTANCE EFFORT BUT IS NATURALLY SYMPATHETIC TO IT. BECAUSE OF ISLAND'S PROXIMITY TO THAI TERRITORY, HE SAID MILITARY MAY HAVE TO BECOME INVOLVED IF LPLA, IN EFFORT TO TAKE BACK ISLAND, OPEN FIRE AND STRIKE THAI HOMES. HE NOTED THAT LAO HAVE MADE NO EFFORT TO RETAKE ISLAND

BUT FLEW OVER IT IN HELICOPTER APRIL 7. ON SAME DAY LAO WARNED
RESIDENTS OVER LOUDSPEAKER TO BE OFF ISLAND THAT EVENING,
BUT VIRTUALLY NO ONE LEFT.

4. SITUATION IS NO DOUBT EMBARRASSING FOR THE LAO AND POTENTIALLY
DANGEROUS BUT, IN VIEW OF ISLAND'S WIDE SEPARATION OVER MAIN
CHANNEL OF MEKONG FROM REST OF LAOS, LAO MIGHT ALLOW IT TO REMAIN
AS IS FOR SOME TIME RATHER THAN MAKE FAIRLY CONCERTED EFFORT
TO RETAKE IT.

5. CONSUL UDORN AND RTG OFFICIALS HAVE OBSERVED THAT NUMBER OF
LAO REFUGEES FLEEING INTO NONG KHAI AREA APPEARS TO HAVE
INCREASED IN RECENT DAYS.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO07703
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770124-0642
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770472/aaaackjt.tel
Line Count: 76
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c460bca7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2851219
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LAO RESISTANCE ELEMENT OCCUPIES ISLAND IN MEKONG
TAGS: PBOR, PINT, LA, TH, LPLA, (MOTHAVONGSE, KAMBAO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c460bca7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009